

Abraham Lincoln papers

From Agenor-Etienne Gasparin to Abraham Lincoln [With Endorsement by Lincoln]¹, January 7, 1864

¹ Gasparin was a French politician and writer who wrote a book on the American Civil War entitled *The Uprising of a Great People* (1861). Here, in a translated version of his letter, he approves of Lincoln's Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction of December 8, 1863.

(Translation.)

Rivage, near Geneva

Switzerland, Jany 7th 1864.

My dear Sir.

You have allowed me to address to you occasionally the expression of my thoughts. You know perhaps the devotion I entertain for the noble cause which is personified in you. That cause is now more than ever near becoming a success, but success is going to impose upon you the solution of a difficult problem.

You have felt it and you have just shown in your recent proclamation², the principles out of which there can be no salvation. Those principles are excellent. May God grant you to maintain them in spite of contradictions and of collisions which certainly will yet occur.

² A reference to Lincoln's December 8, 1863 Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction. A draft of the proclamation is in this collection.

In the first place you shield the abolition of slavery from any reaction. This stand must be taken, so as to prevent any backward steps; the war being at an end, must annihilate the cause of the war.

Secondly, You open to the Southern states an easy way to come back in the Union upon a footing of equality. This also is necessary, or else you would be carried towards a system which intends to maintain a régime of conquest and to abolish the states.

Positively, you have promised to suppress confiscations, an admirable measure, for confiscations are odious, and nothing stable can be done by acts of violence, even should they bear the character of retaliation.

Be assured, Sir, that, by addressing to you the feeble testimony of my approbation, I do express something else than my personal opinion, which would be of little importance, I am the organ of a great many voices which have defended your cause in Europe. Our efforts have not been quite fruitless, and the European opinion in Europe speaks more and more in your favor.

I hope you have recovered your health.³ The christians of here, pray for you and your cause.

3 Lincoln had been ill with varioloid, a mild form of smallpox.

Pray, receive, sir, the assurance of my devotion and my respects.

(Signed) A de Gasparin.

[Endorsed on Envelope by Lincoln:]

Count Gasparin